WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A method of consigning at least one product between a consignor and a retailer, comprising:

generating an inventory order for stocking levels of the least one consigned product in a

5   retailer's distribution system;

shipping an inventory quantity of the at least one consigned product based on the

inventory order to the retailer's distribution system;

creating a virtual inventory in a consignor's computer system which matches the

inventory quantity shipped to the retailer's distribution system and identifies an inventory

10   location in the retailer's distribution system;

receiving sales data of the at least one consigned products from the retailer's distribution

system;

replenishing the retailer's distribution system by shipping a replenishment inventory

quantity of the at least one consigned products to the retailer's distribution system;

15   decrementing the virtual inventory in the consignor's computer system based on the sales

data received from the retailer's distribution system,

generating an invoice based on the sales data and transmitting the invoice to a retailer;

and

creating an accounts receivable value owed by the retailer based on the sales data.

20   2. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the sales data of the at least one consigned

products from the retailer's distribution system occurs on a periodic basis.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the sales data is received in aggregated by a retailer's

computer system and then transmitted to the consignor's computer system.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the sales data is received in real-time directly from a plurality of consignee retail sales locations.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein a consignor computer system aggregates the received real-time sales for a specified time period.

6. The method of claim 1, further including receiving a payment from the retailer and reducing the accounts receivable by the amount of a payment made the retailer.

7. The method of claim 1, further including analyzing a consignment inventory request provided by the retailer utilizing at least one of a group of factors including inventory at a consignee's distribution center, inventory at the consignor's inventory location, advertising expected in a future timeframe, sales promotions expected during the future timeframe, and historical trends of sales of the at least one consigned product during same or similar time periods in the past.

8. A consignor or supplier computing system, comprising:

an analysis module to receive a consignment inventory request, to analyze the consignment inventory request, and to create a verified consignment request;

an inventory module to receive the verified consignment request from the analysis module, to create an initial consignment order, and to transmit the initial consignment order to a consignor inventory location in order for the consignor inventory location to ship consigned products listed on the initial consignment order to a consignee distribution system; and

a virtual inventory module coupled to the inventory module to create a record to identify an inventory quantity of consigned products and an inventory location of the consigned products shipped to the consignee distribution system.

9. The consignor or supplier computing system of claim 8, further including a financial module to receive sales information from the consignment distribution system, to generate an invoice based on the received sales information, to transmit the invoice to a consignee computer system based on the received sales information, to generate a virtual inventory decrement request

5   based on the sales data, and to transmit the virtual inventory decrement request to the virtual inventory module.

10. The consignor or supplier computer system of claim 8 wherein the analysis module receives the sales information, evaluates the sales information along with at least one factor of a group of factors including inventory at a consignee's distribution center, inventory at the

10   consignor's inventory location, advertising expected in a future timeframe, sales promotions expected during the future timeframe, and historical trends of sales of the at least tone consigned product during same or similar time periods in the past.

11. The consignor or supplier computer system of claim 10, wherein the evaluation of the sales information along with the at least one factor of the group of factors is performed

15   automatically by the analysis module of the consignor system.

12. The consignor or supplier computer system of claim 10, wherein the evaluation of the sales information along with the at least one factor of the group of factors is performed by an operator of the consignor or supplier computer system.

13. A consignment system for consigning products from a supplier to a retailer, the

20   system comprising;

a supplier computing system;

a supplier inventory location to house consigned products; and

a retailer computer system to generate an initial consignment request identifying a quantity of consignment products to be shipped from the supplier inventory location and identifying a proposed retailer inventory location at which the consignment products are to be stocked, and to transmit the initial consignment request;

5   wherein the supplier computer system receives the initial consignment request from a communications network after the retailer computer system has transmitted the initial consignment request to the communications network, analyzes the consignment order to generate an initial consignment order identifying a shipped quantity of the consigned products to be shipped to a retailer distribution system, transmits the initial consignment order to the supplier

10   inventory location; and creates a virtual inventory of consigned products in the supplier computing system that identifies a stocked quantity of consigned products located at each location in the retailer distribution system, and

     wherein the supplier inventory location ships the consigned products to the retailer distribution system.

15   14. The consignment system of claim 13, wherein the retailer distribution system receives the shipped quantity of the consigned products, maintains some of the shipped quantity of consigned products in a retailer distribution center based on the initial consignment order's instructions on how many consigned products are to be maintained at the retailer distribution center, and ships out a remainder of the shipped quantity of consigned products to a plurality of

20   retailer sales locations.

     15. The consignment system of claim 14, wherein the retailer sales locations transmit sales data at a specified timeframe through the communications network to the supplier

computing system and the supplier computing system aggregates the sales data for a monitoring timeframe.

16. The consignment system of claim 15, wherein the specified timeframe is real-time or as a short timeframe after a sale of the consigned products takes place.

17. The consignment system of claim 16, wherein the supplier computer system receives the sales out data, analyzes the sales data for the monitoring timeframe to determine a replenishment quantity of consigned products and a corresponding stocking location of the replenishment quantity of consigned products, creates a replenishment order identifying the replenishment quantity of consigned products to be shipped to the retailer distribution system and the corresponding stocking location for the consigned products, and transmits the replenishment order to the supplier inventory location.

18. The consignment system of claim 17, further including the supplier inventory location receiving the replenishment order and shipping out the replenishment quantity of consigned products to the retailer distribution system.

19. The consignment system of claim 14, wherein the plurality of retail sales locations transmits sales information to the retailer computer system at a specified timeframe, the retailer computer system receives the sales information from the plurality of retail sales locations and aggregates the sales information from the plurality of retail sales location, and the retailer computer system transmits the aggregated sales information to the consignor computer system.

20. A computer-readable medium having encoded thereon a computer-readable program code which when executed causes a computer to:

receive an initial consignment inventory request from a retailer or consignee;

analyze the initial consignment inventory request to determine an initial consignment

stocking level order;

transmit the initial consignment stocking level order to a consignor inventory location;

and

5   create a virtual inventory record corresponding to the initial consignment stocking level

order and detailing a quantity of consigned products stocked in a consignee distribution system

plus a location of each of the consigned products.

21. A computer-readable medium having encoded thereon a computer-readable program

code which when executed causes a computer to:

10   receive sales information of a consigned product from the retailer;

generate an invoice based on the sales information of the consigned product;

decrement a virtual inventory record based on the sales information of the consigned

product, wherein the virtual inventory record tracks stocking levels at each inventory location in

a retailer distribution system; and

15   create an accounts receivable record for the retailer corresponding to the invoice

generated based on the sales information.

22. The computer-readable medium of claim 21 having further encoded thereon a

computer-readable program which when executed causes a computer to:

receive a remittance of a certain value from the retailer and to decrease the accounts

20   receivable record based by the remittance of the certain value.